

**D i o c e s e  
o f  
M e n e v i a**



**St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Carmarthen  
Section 50 Inspection Report**

**Inspection dates: October 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**Reporting Inspector: Mrs Sue Roberts**

**Accompanying Inspector: Miss Liz Richards**

**Type of School: Primary**

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

**Number on roll: 81**

**Local Authority: Carmarthenshire**

**Chair of Governors: Mrs Pippa Scott**

**School Address: Union Street, Carmarthen, CF31 3DE**

**Tel. No: 01267 234297**

**Email address: head@stmarysc.ysgolccc.org.uk**

**Parishes served: St Mary's Carmarthen**

**Date of previous inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

**Headteacher: Mrs Olga Phelps**

***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

St. Mary's is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School in the county town of Carmarthen. The school serves the local parish but also provides education for pupils from neighbouring areas. Pupils are from a wide variety of social backgrounds.

The school caters for learners aged three to eleven who are accommodated in four classes. Currently there are 80 learners on roll, including six Nursery children. Pupils are organised into four split-aged classes. The classes are as follows: Nursery and Reception Class, Year 1 and 2 Class, Year 3 and Year 4 class and a Year 5 and Year 6 Class. Nursery children enter school on attaining their third birthday and are taught with the Reception class. On entry, their attainment covers a wide range of abilities.

Nineteen pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN), including one with a statement of SEN. Twelve pupils (15%) claim their entitlement to free school meals. This is below the LA average of 16.8% in KS2 and 18.5% in the Foundation Phase. Fifty pupils (62.5%) have English as an additional language and of these pupils twenty pupils have reached Stage E of the EAL Continuum. (Stage A – New to English and Stage E – Fluent). None has Welsh as their first language.

Accommodation and School Building - The school building is well maintained and the classrooms are spacious. The Nursery and Reception is in a separate building which was built approximately 10 years ago. There is an outdoor learning area directly off this classroom. There is a school hall with ample area for P.E. and a stage area for drama activities and concerts, a library and staffroom. There is a well-equipped kitchen preparing fresh meals daily.

School Grounds - The school playgrounds offer ample space for games and activities. There is a field at the back of the school and the school has access to the parish field which is located in front of St Mary's Church. St Mary's School enjoys a positive, friendly and welcoming ethos. Staff meet regularly to allow the school continued development and improvement.

## Summary

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

### Adequate

St Mary's is an adequate school because:

- the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but is still too variable
- most pupils work competently when provided with appropriate tasks
- the Headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school
- partnerships with parents, the parish, the local community and the wider world are improving
- collective worship is adequate; pupils do not take a leading role

However:

- The process for the monitoring, evaluating and reviewing of religious education and the Catholic life of the school is still at an early stage of

development.

- all governors need to be involved in monitoring and evaluating standards and teaching and learning within the school.
- opportunities for INSET and sharing good practice within and outside the school need to be developed.
- Prayer and worship should be further developed so that it underpins all aspects of school life for both staff and pupils

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

**Adequate**

Prospects for improvement are adequate due to:

- improvements for change are still at an early stage of development
- recent developments in monitoring are beginning to impact on outcomes for pupils, but self-evaluation processes are not embedded in the life of the school
- areas previously identified in 2009 as needing improvement have not been fully addressed

### **Recommendations and Required Actions**

What does the school need to do to improve further?

**R1** Develop the Catholic life and ethos of the school involving all stakeholders

**R2** Establish more robust and rigorous monitoring of the teaching and learning of RE as well as the use of ICT.

**R3** Involve pupils more fully in the preparation, participation and leadership of collective worship.

**R4** Ensure consistency in the marking of pupils' work with clear indicators to move their learning forward.

**R5** Develop the use of success criteria, learning objectives, assessment of RE with NBRIA levels by effective contribution by, and communication with pupils.

### **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?**

**Adequate**

Pupils in St Mary's School show interest, enjoyment and enthusiasm for religious education. The school's mission statement 'Living the Faith' is displayed in the entrance hall, on the school's website and in the prospectus. The school has good relationships with parents who are keen to support the school and their children's learning. They know that their children are safe and happy at school and they feel confident about approaching them at any time. Communication about the detail of their children's current religious education topic is limited.

Most pupils make adequate progress particularly taking into account their starting point and the high percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language. These pupils are supported well by effective classroom assistants. Insufficient attention is paid to the provision of challenging learning activities and pupils would benefit from a greater emphasis being placed on the development of reflective thinking and Assessment for Learning strategies. Pupils are not given enough opportunity to lead their own learning. Although success criteria and learning objectives are evident in pupils' books, they are not consistently shared with them or generated by them.

Pupils have a sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. The children are proud of their school. Pupils are encouraged to take on different roles of responsibility in the school such as members of the school council or eco-committee. They have recently been instrumental in securing their own budget to use for future projects. They make a positive contribution to the life of the school and feel that they are listened to well by staff. The pupils develop positive attitudes to keeping healthy and promote a healthy snack policy. Fruit is sold by the pupils at break-times. There are a range of popular extra-curricular activities that enrich pupils' learning experiences. The breakfast club is well supported and provides a welcoming, safe, secure environment for pupils at the start of each day.

Standards in curriculum Religious Education are adequate. Pupils' books did not contain sufficient work to reflect or evidence the necessary progress through the diocesan programme Come and See. The use of the NBRIA levels of attainment are not clear to all staff and are therefore used inconsistently. The tracking of pupils' progress is at an early stage, but has been identified by the school as an area of development. By the end of key stage 2 most pupils achieve expected standards and some achieve good standards. Pupils would benefit from more differentiated activities which provide suitable challenge for all levels. The presentation of pupils' work is good, with examples of pleasing work in key stage 2.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is generally good. In the whole school act of worship they displayed reverence and respect, sang tunefully and joined in community prayer with confidence. There is limited opportunity for pupils to respond to invitations for spontaneous prayer in Foundation phase, but class prayer books were evident in both key stage 2 classes. Pupil initiated acts of worship are limited. Pupils' spirituality and moral development would benefit from being more fully involved in this.

Involvement with the local parish community is developing. The pupils are timetabled to attend Mass in the adjoining parish church on a weekly basis.

<b>KQ 2. How Good is Provision?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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In St Mary's School pupils behave well in class and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They appear to enjoy religious education and speak enthusiastically about the subject. Most work competently on a variety of activities in different groupings. Most pupils are able to relate their learning to their own lives. Pupils in Nursery/reception were able to recall the events of baptism that they took part in with the parish priest. In their oral and written responses many are starting to use the language that reflects the themes and expectations of the Come and See programme.

The quality of teaching and learning is adequate overall, with some teaching judged to be good. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they link this well to their understanding of the religious education programme. Most teachers make use of ICT within lessons, but there are still opportunities to develop this further. Pupils are provided with formative feedback orally and in the marking of their completed work. Although the written feedback is positive, it is not consistently linked to the learning objective or success criteria of the lesson. This could be further developed to maximise learning opportunities.

Most pupils show interest in their work and are enthusiastic about their learning in curriculum religious education.

The use of the 'I Can' statements and the completion of a pupil tracking sheet are in their early stages. These will however, provide a clear picture of pupil progress and can be used to identify the pupils' next steps in their learning. Assessment arrangements are adequate. Teachers record end-of-topic assessment results. However, these are not collated or analysed effectively. As a result, opportunities for leaders and governors to have a thorough understanding and grasp of pupils' rates of progress by class, year group or of a range of smaller groups are lost.

Overall, the quality of prayer and collective worship is adequate. The legal requirement for a daily act of worship to take place is met. Acts of worship reflect the Catholic nature of the school appropriately, however opportunities were not provided for all classes to demonstrate this during the inspection. Currently, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to plan and lead collective worship. This is an area for development. Parents are invited to join staff and pupils in the playground first thing in the morning to say prayers together, this is well supported. The parish priest recently celebrated a 'dry Mass' for the pupils allowing them to be led through the responses and understand the rites of the Mass more fully. This practice has enhanced provision for collective worship and it shows potential for future development. The provision for pupils to learn about other world faiths is under-developed.

<b>KQ3. How good are Leadership and Management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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The newly appointed Headteacher has a realistic vision of areas for improvement. She enjoys a constructive relationship with staff, governors and parents. She supports and appreciates their commitment and assistance and is very aware of her role in securing the necessary improvements. The governing body fulfils its statutory and canonical responsibilities and it is stable in nature. The link governor for RE was on holiday during the time of the inspection and the Chair of Governors did not appear to exhibit an in-depth knowledge of the religious life of the school. The rigour with which governors have put procedures in place for the monitoring, evaluating and reviewing (MER) of the Catholic life of the school and of the RE curriculum is under-developed.

Aspects of the provision of Religious Education are monitored termly by the subject co-ordinator and outcomes inform areas for development, which are fed into the school and RE improvement plan. However, there is little evidence of this prior to 2013, despite the recommendations of the previous inspection. The Religious Education self-evaluation report provides a mostly accurate view of the school's current performance and indicates some realistic areas to be developed. A more systematic approach to monitoring, evaluation and review processes would be beneficial in order to drive forward school improvement.

Opportunities for parents/carers to participate as fully as possible in the life of the school are limited. There are currently no parents who come in to offer their support as volunteers to listen to readers or share their skills with the pupils, but would readily do so if the opportunity arose. However, they are encouraged to attend the school assemblies and Masses. Partnership with the parish is developing. Pupils preparing for Sacraments attend after school sessions in school led by staff and supported by the parish priest. Pupils from the parish who do not attend the school are also invited to attend and numbers are growing.

Leaders and managers ensure that all pupils receive the required time for curriculum religious education. Aspects have recently been monitored by the Headteacher and action points fed back to staff to effect improvement. This is at an early stage, but is an area for future development as identified in the self-evaluation report. Although the current development plan for religious education identifies strengths and areas for improvement it lacks sufficiently detailed tasks, and actions to be implemented, for targets to be achieved.

The school has good links with the feeder secondary school, including St John Lloyd, despite its distance from the school. A link has also been created with St Mary's Primary School, Llanelli to work collaboratively on aspects identified on the self-evaluation and development plan. Staff attend annual diocesan staff training which provides thorough guidance on the diocesan programme of study and developing the Catholic ethos of a school. Two members of staff have the CCRS and three are currently studying towards it.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Twenty two parents completed the parents' questionnaires. Most were very positive in nature.

## **Comments**

- *My child is being taught about Compassion this term and I find she really is taking it on board. She thinks about it and then asks me questions which is really good thing. I think it is contributing to her outlook on life. She also reads her Bible at bedtime and enjoys the stories. Although she isn't of any faith, her lessons at St.Mary's are having a positive effect on her, which I think is a really good thing.*
- *I am very pleased with school and my child's progress in her education and religious education, which is why I drive 30 miles a day to attend this school.*

## **Appendix 2**

### **Evidence Base**

- The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation
- Meetings with the Headteacher and religious education subject leader
- Meetings with representatives of the governing body.
- 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
- 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.***